



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA PROVIDES \$6 MILLION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

BARTLETT, NH, May 1, 2008 -- Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer today awarded funds to two local organizations that have been selected to receive funding for business development and water improvement projects.

Schafer awarded \$500,000 to the Mount Washington Valley Economic Council to provide low-interest financing for business and community development projects. The funding is expected to save 85 jobs and create 50 additional ones. It is being provided through the USDA Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program, which funds community development or regional planning groups that in turn re-lend the money to local businesses.

"Today's investments give communities the tools they need for their own improvements, and we're helping the Lower Bartlett Water Precinct bring clean and ample water to this region," Schafer said during a trip to New Hampshire, where he recognized volunteers with Presidential Volunteer Service Awards as part of National Volunteer Week.

Schafer awarded \$5.5 million to the Lower Bartlett Water Precinct to finance improvements and expansions to water mains and pumping stations in the North Country communities of Partridge Woods, Glen Acres, Nordic Village and Linderhof. The grant and loan funds will be used to extend water and sewer services to approximately 350 residents. Prior to today's announcement, USDA Rural Development had already invested nearly \$4 million in water system improvements to adjacent communities.

Following the funding announcements, Schafer presented Presidential Volunteer Service Awards to volunteer fire and rescue personnel from the Bartlett, Jackson, East Conway and North Conway Fire Departments, and the Bartlett/Jackson Ambulance Services. The awards are given to individuals and groups who have set high standards for service to others.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in rural America. This is done by providing financial and technical assistance to foster growth and new opportunities for business development, home ownership, and critical community and technology infrastructure. To learn more about USDA Rural Development programs, visit the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.

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